

MSWCC on site in Byhalia for watershed lake work

BY KATHY DOUGAN, MSWCC

BYHALIA, MS – Early in the morning of Aug. 21, 2019, MSWCC Deputy Administrator Brad Shedd, Environmental Administrator Lee Smith and Natural Resource Specialist Lance Middleton left the commission's Jackson office and travelled to the site of a watershed lake in Marshall County, near Byhalia, to help a landowner with a problem.

As part of MSWCC's Water Quality Program, which includes

the commission's Watershed Repair and Rehabilitation Program, MSWCC staff members, NRCS representatives and the property owner were on site to discharge water from the lake into a nearby creek in order for the owner to replace the broken pipe that caused the watershed lake dam to fail.

Because a pipe beneath the dam was corroded, a hole blew in the side of the pipe and water leaked underneath the dam, which caused it to collapse.

The result was that instead of draining the watershed lake into the creek when the lake was filled to capacity, the water leaked from the pipe and ran under the dam.

To solve the problem required MSWCC to set up and utilize a drainage system constructed of 8-inch PVC and aluminum pipe and water valves to lower the lake level.



VALVES HAVE BEEN OPENED AND WATER IS BEING SIPHONED FROM THE LAKE AND IS DRAINING INTO THE DRY CREEK BED..

Two temporary drain lines made by connecting 20-foot sections of PVC pipe were placed on the ground, extending from the lake to the creek bed.

After the pipe sections were in place and valves were connected at both ends, the valves were opened, which created a siphon to drain the lake. The process of draining the lake continued until Aug. 27, when the lake had drained low enough

to allow the landowner to prepare to remove and replace the old riser and corroded pipe.

The landowner and NRCS will continue monitoring the watershed lake and repairs.

Executive Director Mark Gilbert said that MSWCC has repaired and rehabilitated about 107 watershed lakes.



MSWCC ARRIVING ON SITE AUG. 21, 2019



RISER IN THE WATERSHED LAKE



THE RISER IS EXPOSED AND READY FOR REPAIR BY THE LANDOWNER. MSWCC'S WORK AT THE SITE IS COMPLETE.

Smith receives Award of Appreciation from Attala County at Awards Banquet

KOSCIUSKO, MS— At the Attala County SWCD Conservation Awards Banquet on Sept. 24, 2019, MSWCC Environmental Administrator Lee Smith was presented with an Appreciation Award from Joe Jones, Chairman of the Attala County Board of Commissioners.

An employee of MSWCC since 1995, Smith started out as a Field Representative in the North Area, and later served as a Field Representative in the Central Area, where he provided services and assistance to Attala County.

He was promoted to the position of MSWCC Environmental Administrator in August 2018.

“This year’s Appreciation Award goes to someone who far surpassed all expectations in his assistance to the Attala County Soil and Water Conservation District,” Jones said, adding that Smith continually went over and beyond ensuring that the District stayed up-to-date on all operating policies and procedures.

“He graciously volunteered countless times to assist the District in all activities and functions as well as assisted the District with budget preparations and District program implementation,” Jones said.

The banquet was held at the Holmes Community College, Attala Center.



LEE SMITH, MSWCC Environmental Administrator, received an Award of Appreciation from Attala County at the Conservation Awards Banquet on Sept. 24, 2019. Photo by Michelle Salers

Beginning of school year is best time to start an Envirothon team

The start of a new school year is a great time to put together student teams and begin training for the 2020 Mississippi Envirothon competition.

For those new to Envirothon, the event is an Environmental Education Competition — the largest in Mississippi — in which student teams in grades 9-12 prepare with an advisor and are tested in five knowledge areas: *Soils/Land Use*,

Aquatic Ecology, Wildlife, Forestry, and a *Current Issue*, which for the 2020 competition is *Water Resources Management: Local Control and Local Solutions*.

To get started, talk to your advisor at your school or local FFA chapter, contact Envirothon Coordinator Chelsey Gazaway at 662-647-8857, ext. 103; email Chelsey.Gazaway@ms.nacdn.net; or visit the MSWCC website at

www.mswcc.ms.gov and click on the **ENVIROTHON** left-hand tab.



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www.mswcc.ms.gov



Mississippi Soil & Water
Conservation Commission
680 Monroe Street, Suite B
Jackson, MS 39202
Office: 601-354-7645
Fax: 601-354-6628
website: www.mswcc.ms.gov
Kathy Dougan, MSWCC
Public Relations Director
kdougan@mswcc.ms.gov

FARM POND MANAGEMENT

By Lance Middleton
MSWCC Natural Resource Specialist

During the dog days of summer, the never-ending heat is a tough environment for man and beast. Luckily, we land-dwelling creatures can get relief from the heat by taking a dip in a pond or a lake, taking shelter in the shade, or going inside our homes.

Unfortunately, this is not the case for fish, who suffer in the heat, and unlike



LANCE MIDDLETON

us, struggle to get enough oxygen during hot weather.

Warm water holds less dissolved oxygen than cold water, and adding to the problem is that organisms, algae and bacteria consume oxygen in ponds, too. During sunny days, algae produces oxygen through sunlight and nutrients, however, at night, once the process of photosynthesis stops, algae and other organisms respire and deplete the oxygen level.

Algae populations at the proper levels in farm ponds are essential building blocks for healthy, productive farm ponds.

As long as the sun shines most of the day, oxygen levels are adequate for fish requirements.

However, when the sun is shielded by the clouds for several days in a row, algae dies from the lack of sunlight, causing dissolved oxygen levels to be depleted.

On warm summer nights during algal

blooms, the dissolved-oxygen concentration sometimes drops too low for the fish, and a die-off can occur.

Sometimes this happens as a result of natural conditions, or can result from humans adding nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus to water systems.

Nutrients come from many sources such as fertilizers, automobiles, sewage, manure and others. Sometimes fertilizers from yards and pastures wash into our ponds with summer showers, causing larger than normal algae bloom.

An excess of nutrients tends to speed up the growth of algae and diminish the availability of dissolved oxygen. Low, dissolved oxygen can result from other factors, too, such as poor flushing or circulation, dredging, or a sudden rain after a dry spell.

Some fish kills can occur with devastating results. Much of this is dependent on the size and water depth of the pond. Other factors affecting the severity of the fish kill are the number and size of fish.

Larger fish such as bass, catfish, carp, large crappie, and large bream are the first to die, primarily because

Why are the fish in my pond dying?



A lack of oxygen, not poisons or toxins, are most likely to cause summer fish losses in Mississippi ponds. MSU Extension Service

larger fish require more dissolved oxygen for life. Most fully stocked ponds require dissolved oxygen levels to be greater than 4 to 5 parts per million to be present in the pond.

With proper pond management, landowners can minimize their risk of a catastrophic fish kill in farm ponds. Maintaining proper fish stocking levels is essential.

Owners should catch and keep fish from time to time, and be careful not to overfeed fish. It is recommended to use only as much fish food as can be consumed by fish in 15 minutes.

An aerator system is also recommended for those extended days without sufficient amounts of sunlight and for use at night.

SOURCE: Department of the Interior, US Geological Services, USGA

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct. 11-12: 2019 Fall Flower & Garden Fest, Truck Crops Experiment Station, 2024 Experiment Station Road, Crystal Springs, Miss. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Info: <http://extension.msstate.edu/fallfest>.

MACD ANNUAL MEETING:
Jan. 22-23, 2020, Jackson-Hilton, Jackson, MS

NACD 74th ANNUAL MEETING:
Feb. 8-12, 2020, Las Vegas.
For more information, please visit NACD's *Annual Meeting* webpage.

DRAWDOWN TICKETS AVAILABLE

It's that time of the year to show your support for Mississippi Association of Conservation Districts Endowment Fund Scholarships.

The 2020 Drawdown is for \$5,000, and only 500 tickets will be sold, which means there is a 1-in-500 opportunity to win.

The Drawdown begins at 6:30 PM Wed., Jan. 22, 2020, at the 2020 MACD Annual

Meeting at the Hilton-Jackson. Drawdown tickets are \$50 each, and you do not have to be present to win.

Tickets can be purchased from your conservation district county office or from MACD Secretary/Treasurer Hope Daley.

For more information, please contact Hope Daley at email: hrgd1984@yahoo.com or call 601-325-8599.